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—Seymour Krim

THE

Commonweal

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by Francis E. McMahon

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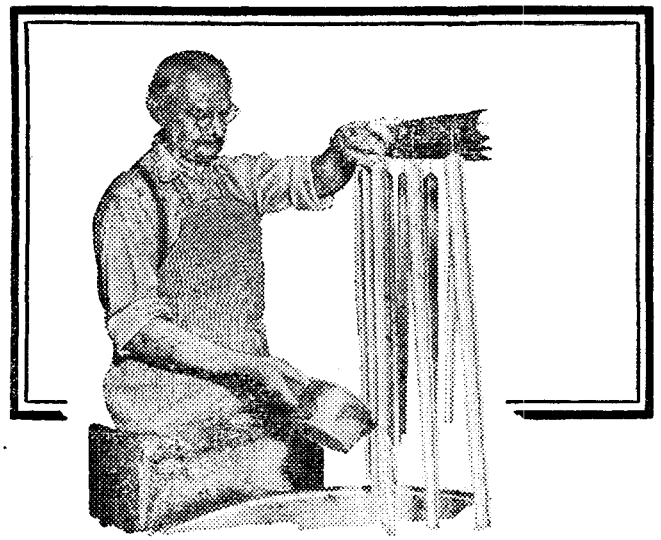

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

FRANCO, PERON AND THE CHURCH

THE ROLE of the Church in the world is one of paradox and tension. On the one hand, the Church recognizes the State as not only legitimate, but as necessary for the development of man within the temporal order. The State is neither her delegate nor agent; the things which are truly Caesar's are his by right. On the other hand, the Church insists that her spiritual jurisdiction gives her the power and the duty of judging those actions of the State which involve moral principles. Caesar is not God, nor is he a theologian.

The Church's long history shows that, in the words of Pope Leo XIII, "the Church does not reject any (of the forms of government) that are fitted to procure the welfare of the subject. . ." The same history also shows that Caesar, even when he has not openly opposed or persecuted the Church, has often been tempted to use the Church, her doctrine, her influence as instruments to attain his own ends, and to measure the favors he grants her by the services he expects in return.

These are, among others, the factors that enter into the Church's recurring problem of trying to reach a *modus vivendi* with the State. Critics of the Church sometimes charge that long centuries of experience with the conflict between the temporal and the spiritual power should have enabled the Church to come up with a sure formula for peaceful coexistence with the State. But in this delicate area there are no ready-made formulas, nor any divine assurance of infallibility in the daily decisions made by individual churchmen in their relations to the State. Accuracy requires that the wisdom of each decision be weighed on its own merits, and history records failure as well as success in the efforts of the Church in a given time or in a given place to live in honorable peace with the secular power.

These abstract considerations are made concrete by the article, "Franco and Peron," in this issue of The Commonweal. In this article Mr. Francis E. McMahon describes the attempts made alike by Generals Franco and Peron to identify the Church in his country with his regime, and shows the extent to which each effort was successful.

WE ARE not attempting to evaluate the decision made by individual churchmen in Spain or Argentina to lend their support to these authoritarian regimes; both distance and decency prevent such a venture. But, as Catholics, we cannot but register concern at some of the consequences for the Church of that support.

Chief among these harmful consequences would seem to be the growing anticlericalism among the students and working classes of both countries. According to a recent dispatch from Argentina in the New York *Herald Tribune,* most of that nation's 120,000 university students are anticlerical, and staged a strike to force the resignation of Education Minister dell'Oro Miani, whom they regard as a representative of clerical groups.

Significantly enough, a recent dispatch from Spain appearing in the New York *Times* stated that fifty priests in the area of Bilbao, alarmed by the mounting anticlericalism of industrial workers in the area, had asked their Bishop's permission to support publicly the workers' demands for higher wages. In their petition to the Bishop, the priests maintain that the workers' demands are justified, since the "difference between the purchasing powers of the present salary and what should be the minimum earning power of the workers is appallingly unjust." In a tone of urgency the priests' petition continues: "The workers reproach us that the only

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voice that could be heard in Spain in support of their just claims is that of the Church. They will never forgive us if the Church again fails to raise its voice. . ."

Bilbao is in the Basque province of Vizcaya, which has a strong Catholic tradition and a deeply religious people; in certain areas, however, workers' attendance at Sunday Mass has fallen to fifteen per cent of what it was a few years ago.

A similar disaffection can be seen in the results of a poll given to four hundred students at the University of Madrid several months ago, which showed that sixty-five per cent of the students believed that "the Church does not show enough concern for the working classes."

It is tragic that sixty-five years after the publication of *Rerum Novarum* so many students in a country Catholic by tradition could believe that the Church has too little concern for the worker, and that the workers themselves are showing a deepening hostility toward her.

The voice of the Church has been raised again and again in behalf of the poor, the exploited, and the worker. The fact that, for whatever reasons, it has not yet sounded with full clarity and firmness in Spain and Argentina is a matter of regret for Catholics everywhere.

CURBS ON CREDIT

WITH THE wheels of industry humming at their present pace and wealth being ever more widely distributed among an expanding population, inflation has for many months loomed as the chief domestic threat to sustained prosperity here in the United States. The financial and economic experts at the controls in the present "businessman's" Administration have had plenty of warning signs. The Department of Commerce report that public and private debt increased last year by more than fifty billion dollars indicates a need for caution.

The last of five increases in the federal discount rate took place only in mid-April, yet pressure is mounting from business, and some government, sources to reduce the current rate. One effect of greater obstacles to borrowing money (with the help of several "soft spots" in the national economy) has been actually to lower the demand for loans. The business community is fully aware that the brakes are on.

Which are the industries in decline that would stand to benefit from a return to easier credit conditions? The automobile industry is doubtless the most publicized. Stocks of unsold TV sets and other household appliances are also mounting; there is a noticeable lag in this spring's residential housing "starts"; consumption of cotton cloth is dropping off; manufacturers are ordering less for future delivery now that they have stocked up on steel and other metals in anticipation of possible strikes and inevitably higher prices. All these purveyors of producers' and consumers' goods would presumably benefit immediately from lower borrowing rates.

This would be true to a lesser extent for the makers and distributors of farm implements, for easier farm credit alone cannot solve the chronic and complex farm problem as long as mountainous surpluses continue to lie idle. Curiously enough, however, prices for a number of farm commodities have slowly risen in recent weeks.

In the background is the fact that American industry is planning to expand its giant productive capacity still further—modernization and expansion plans this year call for thirty per cent more expenditure than last. Here and there fears are expressed that adequate credit may not be available for this substantial purpose, whatever the interest.

To resist such pressures cannot be easy even for those who are convinced that American prosperity must be very solidly based. Already dissenting voices are being heard from within the Administration. But those who advocate holding to the higher discount rate until inflation is firmly under control have other devices at hand if certain calculations should turn out to be ill-founded. One of these is to cut taxes, a measure that looks doubly tempting with a two-billion-dollar government surplus in an election year.

With an economy such as ours going anywhere near full steam, control calls for great niceties of

NEXT WEEK

JOHN LAFARGE, S.J., writes about desegregation and the future.

"Repudiation of segregation as a policy is of itself not a solution of the racial problem. It is simply a necessary *condition* for a solution. When you reverse your car and decide not to drive down a dead-end street, your journey still lies ahead of you; it may be a long and difficult journey, but you have definitely learned that that particular route gets you nowhere, especially if the dead end leads into a morass. Where, then, do we go from here?"

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judgment, particularly when the immediate needs and demands of leading individual industries (and of small business) have to balance against the immediate and longer range general good. But such problems seem comparatively simple if compared to those of the government economists of the declining, disheartened 1930's.

THE BLAZING CROSS

WHAT IS termed "the race question" has always been a touchy subject, and anyone considered "too radical" on race often has his troubles, whether he is in the North or the South. But priests and ministers below the Mason-Dixon line who have, from the point of view of the White Councils, the "wrong" attitude on race are having a particularly hard time of it right now. Ministers in particular suffer on this score, since they are usually removable at will by their congregations; to their honor, it should be noted that in recent months a number of ministers, some with wives and children, have been summarily dismissed from their pulpits for this reason. Priests do not, of course, have quite the same problem, but the pressure is there, nonetheless.

How real this pressure can get is illustrated again by recent events in New Orleans. There racial bigots planted a large cross in front of Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel's residence and set it afire, in an obvious attempt to silence him on the racial question. In the long run such tactics will, we feel sure, boomerang; crude threats of violence aimed at churchmen are surely too reminiscent of Germany under Nazism or Russia under Communism for them to have much success in the United States. But if one leaves aside the aura of violence historically associated with the burning cross in the South, the symbolism of the bigots who planted it on the Archbishop's lawn was truer than they knew. All over the world, men carefully watch America's present reactions to the interracial question; for the United States this is a period of great moral testing, and a flaming cross on an Archbishop's lawn is therefore a symbol of hope and triumph rather than of shame.

FIRST TEST

THE LAY-OFFS in the auto industry are already proving two things. First of all, the extent of present unemployment and that anticipated in the months ahead indicates how essential what people called the Guaranteed Annual Wage plan really was. And, secondly, the prospects in the auto industry illustrate the fact that the plan must be perfected and extended.

Better than 150,000 auto workers in seven states have already been laid off. Model change-overs this summer will lay off thousands more. After June 1, Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors will begin to pay supplementary benefits, under the terms of the agreement hammered out with Walter Reuther last year. The basic idea of the plan is to combine supplementary benefits from special funds with state unemployment compensation, in order to bring the laid-off worker's income up to a maximum of sixty-five per cent of his weekly take-home pay for the first four weeks. For the following twenty-two weeks, or any portion of that period, the plan is designed to give the worker combined benefits amounting to sixty per cent of his take-home pay. This is the plan. In actual practice, most of those who will qualify this June will not receive more than three or four weeks of payments under the new agreement, because the plan has not been in operation long enough for its full benefits to be received.

A key factor in the operation of the plan, obviously, is the State's unemployment compensation program. In the case of the auto industry, seven states are principally involved, and the variation in such payments between States is large. A worker who in New York would receive $36.00 a week in unemployment compensation from the State would in Georgia receive $10.00 a week less; in Michigan, the same worker would receive $43.00 a week from the State. In each case the worker would receive supplementary benefits from the industry trust funds sufficient to raise his income first to sixty-five, then to sixty per cent of his normal take-home pay. What is therefore a relatively light payment from the special funds to a worker in Michigan becomes very substantial in Georgia, and almost certainly there will have to be action taken to eliminate this wide disparity in State payments. Such action would be eminently reasonable, for the original idea in unemployment compensation was to provide for payments roughly equal to half a man's pay, and bringing the law up to date would make it easier for more companies to enter into plans like that worked out between the UAW and the auto industry.

The needed improvements in the plan cannot take effect immediately, of course, and the UAW's historic agreement with the auto companies is go-

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ing to be severely tried in the months ahead. This test is coming much too soon for it to be completely fair; the special funds from which payments have to be made have not yet reached a very high level, and workers who will be laid off have not yet had time enough to build up much credit in the fund. But something is still better than nothing, and before the summer is over, not only the workers themselves but all citizens in the communities affected are likely to be grateful for the UAW's supplementary pay plan.

A LITTLE QUESTIONNAIRE

ONE OF the most interesting items at the recent convention of Americans for Democratic Action was the tape-recorded questionnaire that Elmer Davis had prepared for the Presidential contenders. President Eisenhower declined to answer. (Sherman Adams, Assistant to the President, explained that the President's views on "matters of concern to the American people" could be found in his press conferences.) But the three leading Democratic contenders, Adlai Stevenson, Estes Kefauver, and Averell Harriman, did respond. Their replies and the reaction to them not only shed light on their respective qualifications for the Presidency but they also help to reveal the present political temper.

The nature of the questions and answers can be fairly judged from a sample.

Question: Is it not a fact that the United States needs a working President?

Mr. Stevenson: Yes, it is. We can't adjust the office to suit candidates.

Mr. Kefauver: Yes, certainly, the Presidency needs a working President who can put full time at his job.

Mr. Harriman: We certainly do need a working President, and we cannot borrow from the corporate conception of a part-time, semi-retired chairman of the board of directors.

Given such loaded questions it is scarcely surprising that the three candidates seemed to be in complete agreement on questions concerning school integration, a natural gas bill, the "right-to-work" provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, foreign aid, tax cuts, and arms shipments to Israel. So similar were the answers that the New York *Times* said that the Americans for Democratic Action were faced with the "task of distinguishing between a tittle, a jot and a scintilla."

The apparent similarity, however, lies less in the candidates themselves, in their beliefs, attitudes and programs, than it does in the questionnaire. For inherent in such questionnaires is the demand to simplify, to choose between easy alternatives, to offer stock responses. The questions simplify out of existence complexities which cannot lightly be disregarded. They evade rather than clarify the fundamental issues which must be discussed if political debate is to be responsible. Such questions can reduce to a common denominator people with widely divergent views. And it is this that Adlai Stevenson recognized and called to public attention when, at the end of his recorded response, he called the questionnaire a "litmus test," and doubted its value in helping the voter to decide between various issues and candidates. At best, he said, the questions were superficial.

This is the kind of response that is, by now, expected from Adlai Stevenson. At least it should be. For during his last campaign he said he viewed it as "a great opportunity to educate and elevate a people whose destiny is leadership, not alone of a rich, prosperous, contented country as in the past, but of a world in ferment." Four years later the world is still in ferment, and Mr. Stevenson still attempts to educate and elevate an entire people during his campaign. To be sure, he feels the pressure of politicos who disagree with his approach and those who would like to see some evidence of Madison Avenue in his speeches. The strain of resisting such pressures has been evident in some of Mr. Stevenson's speeches, but to show the strain is not to succumb to the pressures. His response to the questionnaire shows that his basic approach to campaigning has not changed.

Yet some auditors at the ADA convention were irritated at his response. Such irritation was expressed by one commentator who wrote in the New York *Post* that "at the end of the questions Adlai, querulously, many thought, took issue with the questions. Tactlessly, he proclaimed them to be superficial. Sermonizing, he gave ADA a little lecture on 'intolerance of tolerance.'"

Such a reaction is illuminating. It helps explain why some who were enthusiastic supporters for Mr. Stevenson in the last campaign are at present diffident. For such people seem to think it is fine if Mr. Stevenson tells the farmers that there is no easy answer to their problems, if he lectures the American Legion. But they—they need neither lectures or sermons; they need neither to be educated or elevated. It is as if they said, "Yes, there is a time for greatness, but not here, not now." As we said, the little questionnaire is a sharp comment on the candidates and the present political temper.

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Franco and Peron

WHY HAS FRANCO MANAGED TO SURVIVE ALL STORMS, WHEREAS THE ARGENTINE DICTATOR NOW LANGUISHES IN EMBITTERED EXILE?

FRANCIS E. McMAHON

AT THE CLOSE of World War II, the dictatorship of Juan Perón appeared to be solidly entrenched for the indefinite future. The rule of Francisco Franco, on the contrary, was on the verge of collapse. Perón's control over Argentina had been consolidated by a triumphant election early in 1946. The gold reserves of the country were enormous. Though the regime had been sharply condemned for its pro-Nazi activities during the war, it had been restored to good favor after promising to amend its ways. Franco, on the other hand, had survived the war only to confront the cold hostility of the Allies. Spain was formally excluded from the United Nations. The country was in desperate economic straits. The outlook for the regime was apparently hopeless.

Within a decade, however, it was Perón's government that had collapsed, with its leader forced into exile. The successor government began a long and laborious task of establishing a democratic order. It presided over a nearly bankrupt country, and it was continuously harassed by minor disturbances caused by die-hard Peronistas. But Franco has survived all storms. His government today is assiduously cultivated by foreign diplomats and businessmen. Spain is now a member of the United Nations. Perón languishes in embittered exile: Franco continues to direct the fortunes of his country.

How account for this reversal? Has Franco proven to be the more astute of the two men? Was there a flaw in the character of the one which the other has lacked? Or were imponderable historical forces, independent of the wills and the abilities of both men, responsible for the change? There is no simple answer. But some elements of the explanation are clear enough.

FRANCO and Perón have had many traits in common. Both were the products of an authoritarian military tradition. By temperament and formation, they had little sympathy for an authentic democratic order. The political traditions of neither Argentina nor Spain were so solidly democratic as to discourage the ambitions of such men for one-man rule. The burgeoning Fascist and Nazi movements of the thirties quickly won their sympathies.

Perón became a key figure in the Nazi conspiracies in South America. Franco had not only been helped during the Civil War by Hitler and Mussolini, but from the beginning of the World War his regime had generally supported the Axis. Long before Hitler attacked Russia in June, 1941, the Spanish press had been fanatically pro-Nazi. After the assault on Russia, Spanish propaganda expanded the theme of anti-Communism. The new emphasis did not prevent the authorities from allowing German supply ships to service, from Spanish harbors, the Nazi submarines ravaging the Allied fleets in the Atlantic. At the same time, self-interest, combined with strong pressures, prompted Franco to make some concessions to the Allies. The Spanish and Argentine governments co-operated in the anti-American program of *Hispanidad* in Latin America.

Both men achieved much success in balancing the factions that supported them. The power of neither Perón nor Franco rested upon a single base. They were forced to maintain an uneasy equilibrium between diverse and frequently conflicting elements. Perón's regime rested mainly upon three forces: Labor, the Army and the Church. Franco's strength was derived chiefly from the Army, the Church and the upper classes. As a further support, Perón created and developed the Peronist party. This group of self-seeking, greedy and corrupt sycophants corresponded in many respects to the Falange of Franco.

Perón's attitude towards the Church was completely cynical. Though lacking any genuine religious convictions himself, he saw the value of winning the support of Catholics. His prototype was Henry IV of France: "Paris is well worth a Mass." Through heavy subsidies for religious institutions, through sanctioning religious instruction in the state schools, and through surrounding government functions with a religious aura, he won many adherents in religious circles. A minority of Catholics, the Christian Democrats, vainly warned

Mr. McMahon, who has written frequently for The Commonweal, was formerly a correspondent in both Spain and Argentina.

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their fellow-religionists against the dangers of supporting Perón. Perón went to extremes in attempting to identify the Church with his regime. Illustrative of the extravagances were the textbooks in which appeared the haloed head of the late Evita Perón on a page opposite to one containing a picture of the Saviour.

Religiously, Franco is a different type. On this plane, he lacks the cynicism of Perón. His Catholicity is sincere, but it is that of a man who expects gratitude and support for the assistance he has allegedly given the Church. Through divine mandate, he believes, he governs Spain. Like Perón, he has sought to link the Church inextricably with his regime. A textbook on education published in Spain some years ago asserted that "the teacher is the instrument upon whom God and Franco rely to achieve in Spain generations of apostles and patriots." And the same book warned any potential dissidents: "Worse than being indifferent is to be independent, because he who is neither with Christ nor with Franco pertains neither to Christ nor to Franco; he is an individual who pretends to arrogate to himself the power of God." The Church has been liberally subsidized. Only a small minority of the clergy has expressed disquiet over the alliance between the civil and the ecclesiastical powers.

Though respectful of the Church, Franco has displayed at times much stubbornness in his dealings with the clergy. Catholic circles have agitated in the past for an autonomous and fully-empowered Catholic University in Spain. Franco has always turned a deaf ear to the suggestion. And despite the urging of Catholic authorities in recent years for greater liberty for the press, no move has been made in this direction. A Concordat was under negotiation for several years. It was not signed until 1953. When this observer inquired at the Vatican in 1946 about the reasons for the delay, he was informed that the Spanish government was demanding certain prerogatives that were inappropriate to the modern age. The ecclesiastical privileges of a Philip II have occasionally inspired the ambitions of Franco.

ONE OF the major contrasts between Perón and Franco has been their relationship to the laboring classes. Through demagogic appeals, Perón succeeded in winning over these groups. Evita Perón helped him tremendously in this victory. But Franco has sought in vain to make a similar conquest. The social legislation of Spain is probably equal to that which Perón fashioned. Such legislation, however, has meant little in terms of real social betterment of the Spanish people. Apart from the fact that Spain is a poor country, social advancements were frequently nullified by maladministration, graft and corruption. The plight of the Spanish worker is no better today—it is often worse—than it was during the Republic. That inefficiency and corruption can lay waste the resources of even a wealthy country is demonstrated by the history of the Perón regime. The Argentine worker was little better off economically after Perón left the scene.

But the decisive reason for Franco's failure with the working classes is the legacy of resentment from the Civil War and its aftermath. The troops of Franco and his allies had to fight and subdue large numbers of the laboring classes. The sympathies of the latter were largely with the Republic. And, once the country was "pacified," thousands of individuals considered to be opposed to Franco were executed after summary trials before military tribunals. The forgiving spirit was altogether lacking in the early years of rule by Franco. And if the working class wished to forget the past, there was the constant reminder in the controlled press about the glorious outcome of "The Crusade" to keep alive the memories.

FRANCO'S RULE has been—by and large—more severe and more ruthless than that of Perón. Under Perón, some slight degree of political opposition was tolerated, and, until the confiscation of *La Prensa* in 1951, a minimum of freedom of the press allowed. The Radical, Socialist and Conservative parties were harassed in countless ways, but they were not completely eliminated. This minimal freedom was owing in part to Perón's desire to preserve the façade of democracy. But it was also due to the fact that Perón had not quite achieved totalitarian control. The landowners—they were bitter opponents of Perón—never wholly lost their privileged economic position. The armed forces contained a large number of officers who were unreconciled to the regime, and who bided their time for revolt.

Under Franco, the liberties of press and assembly were non-existent from the beginning. Oral dissent and criticism of a limited character have been tolerated, though the humbler classes have found it more discreet to keep quiet. Under the restrictions imposed during the Civil War, Franco consolidated his total rule, and the restrictions—so far as press and assembly are concerned—have continued. The purge following the war permanently eliminated countless opponents of Franco. Thousands of others, including Catholic Basques, were forced to flee the country. In another manner, also, the Civil War helped insure the tenure of Franco. It had been a traumatic experience for the Spanish people. Few Spaniards, howsoever opposed to Franco, would welcome a repetition of such a conflict. This is true, at least, of those who had lived through it. The younger generation is apparently less affected.

The opponents of Perón were not inhibited by

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memories of a bloody conflict. Argentina had not witnessed serious civil strife for a century. When Perón committed his grave blunder, therefore, Argentines resorted to the supreme weapon in their command. The blunder consisted in destroying the equilibrium that had sustained Perón for a decade. He was not satisfied to have the tacit support of the Church. He desired full and unqualified allegiance. In his quest for total power, he met the Church head-on in the educational sphere. His reaction was violent and ruthless. The severe measures against the Church—the vicious press campaigns, the burning of churches and the exiling of prelates—antagonized all sectors of the population. These measures were alien to the spirit and traditions of the nation. Those who for other reasons were longing to eliminate Perón joined with the pro-Catholic elements in overthrowing the dictator.

SUCH a conflict between Church and State is unthinkable under present conditions in Spain. The Spanish Church regards the union of Throne and Altar as a vital necessity for its own welfare, especially in a period when the Spanish masses are alienated from it. Franco, for his part, is gratified to have a sacral seal placed upon his work. The danger to the Church emanates from another source—the long-standing anti-clerical passions and resentments of the working classes. The position of the Church remains delicate. Without Franco, it fears it might have to face the onslaughts of anti-clericalism. But with Franco, though anti-clericalism may be temporarily repressed, there is the serious danger of increased hostility towards the Church because of its linkage with an unpopular regime.

The Church is not unaware of the danger. It has sought to mitigate certain evils of the totalitarian rule, and it has addressed itself to the plight of the workers. In 1945, a group of militant Catholics, headed by Dr. Alberto Martín Artajo, entered the government. These men believed that by entering actively into the political scene, the anti-clericalism of the Falange could be effectively countered, and more liberal political institutions be fashioned. Other prominent Catholics, however, opposed this move, warning that it was impossible, under Franco, to bring about a more democratic order. Artajo completely lacked political experience. After a decade as Foreign Minister, he, with his friends, has not succeeded in effecting a single fundamental change in the political structure. On the contrary, they have become prominent apologists for the established order.

The social question has been of almost agonizing concern to some of the prelates of Spain. In 1946, Monsignor Antonio Pildain, Bishop of the Canary Islands, issued a pastoral letter excoriating the governmental bureaucracy for its neglect of the people's problems. He pointedly contrasted the acute misery of the masses with the corruption and indifference of the bureaucrats.

That social conditions have not improved with the passing of time is demonstrated by the pronouncement in January, 1956, of Bishop Angel Herrera of Malaga, one of the leaders of the social apostolate in Spain.

Bishop Herrera declared that the gap between the rich minority and the poor majority was becoming greater in Spain. Political stability, he warned, was impossible without social justice. He severely censured the ruling classes: "They have no idea, not even the remotest, of the reaction that their senseless behavior provokes in the factories, in the rural communities, in the professional circles and in the universities."

But these criticisms, however strong, were not intended as wholesale condemnation of the regime. The Church continues to support Franco. And the other broad bases of the regime—the Army, the nobility, the industrialists, the Falange—show no disposition to forsake the dictator. The various groups jockey for advantages, and each group harbors resentments over particular policies and measures of Franco. But no rival power threatens the *Caudillo*. He continues to preserve the equilibrium of the forces which have long sustained him.

The "cold war" between Russia and the West has added an additional bulwark to his defenses against the fate of Perón. Internationally quarantined immediately after the World War, Franco Spain has been received back into the society of nations. The Western Powers, especially the United States, sought allies where they could find them in the struggle against the Soviets. In 1950, Spain was admitted into the special organizations of the United Nations. In 1953, it signed a military and economic pact with the United States. It became a full-fledged member of the United Nations in 1955. The regime has interpreted this recognition as a complete vindication of itself.

THERE ARE clouds on the horizon, however, small clouds, to be sure, but possible portents of coming storms. In February of this year a sizable group of

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University of Madrid students rebelled against the Falange-dominated student federation. They were attacked by pro-Falange students and blue-shirted ruffians. The violent clashes lasted for three days, and involved an estimated one thousand individuals. The government arrested several of the anti-Falange students, and attributed the disorders to Communistic influence. As a consequence of the outbreak, two cabinet ministers were dismissed. A new Secretary General of the Falange was appointed, José Luis de Arrese. The new head of the Falange served in a similar capacity during World War II. He was ardently pro-Nazi. His current appointment may indicate a harsher rule for Spain.

The regime had been aware of the disaffection in university circles. An official poll was made of four hundred students last year, and the statistics must have provoked some reflection: 60% of the students polled were opposed to the regime; 85% believed the ruling classes to be unscrupulous or otherwise immoral; 52% thought the clergy were ostentatious and ambitious. An overwhelming majority believed that class hatred existed in the country. 60% hoped for a political change that would bring about freedom.

The results of the poll were not published in Spain, and the issues of the New York *Times* reporting and commenting upon it were banned from the country. Subsequent to the poll, the Rector of the University of Madrid, Pedro Lain Entralgo, submitted a confidential report to the government on "The State of Mind of University Youth." He viewed the situation as grave. Although he found the majority of the students were not exercised over national problems, their indifferent state of mind, he maintained, offered no grounds for complacency. Their very indifference made them vulnerable to diverse ideological currents.

A minority of students, he found, were intensely disturbed by conditions in Spain. Politically, they were hostile to a regime which had demonstrated, they believed, its incapacity to solve the grave questions of social justice facing the nation. Religiously, they manifested growing disaffection with the Church. Culturally, they felt their intellectual development was being hampered by the censorship exercised over intellectual pursuits. They were intensely curious about intellectual currents and forms of life existing beyond the frontiers of Spain—phenomena they found all the more attractive because access to them was forbidden. They were dissatisfied with the mediocre level of teaching in the university. The spectacle of a self-seeking ruling class completely indifferent to its obligations affronted their sense of decorum and decency.

Dr. Lain Entralgo concluded his frank analysis by suggesting certain remedial measures: a serious examination of conscience by the directive organisms of the national life; the relaxation of censorship, so that the Spanish student could adequately acquaint himself with the intellectual, literary and artistic currents of the modern world; the expansion of opportunities in professional careers; and an improvement in the quality of instruction both in secular and religious subjects.

The only concrete result thus far of the study submitted by Dr. Lain Entralgo has been his ouster as Rector of the University.

There have been labor disturbances as well this year in Spain. In the northern industrial areas of the country, thousands of workers abandoned their jobs in protest against the rising cost of living. The government had decreed a wage raise, but the workers regarded the raise as insufficient. Strikes are illegal in Spain. Scores of workers were arrested. In some cities, notably Bilbao, factory and mill workers resorted to slow-downs. It is estimated that 50,000 individuals were involved in the disturbances. The government threatened that, unless the workers returned to their posts, they would be deprived of their social security and seniority rights. As a reprisal against the slow-downs, some owners were ordered to close down their plants.

Illegal strikes—and they are all illegal—have become more frequent in recent years, despite the sanctions leveled against the participants. They are a measure of the desperation of the Spanish worker. He has no press to defend his cause. His unions are Falange-controlled, the union leaders virtually functionaries of the government. Reduced almost to the status of a dumb beast of burden, the Spanish worker wearily carries his load until extremities force him into dangerous courses of action.

But Franco will survive these disturbances, whether they be in the academic field or in the ranks of labor. He is solidly entrenched for the present. But what of the future? During his sojourn in America, Foreign Minister Artajo declared that the Spanish people love liberty "above all else." He defended the policies of the present regime: "We administer our victory and guide our policies to conform to Christian, national and social ideals." His rhetoric was not wholly misleading. The Spanish people do love liberty, all the more avidly because deprived of it for two decades. Some day the explosion will come.

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The Exposé Magazines

JOHN P. SISK

THE EVER-CHANGING configuration of magazines on a newsstand might be the best possible index to the nation's state of mind. Why, for instance, does pocket-size cheesecake suddenly outnumber and usurp the position of popular psychology just when *Time*-size masculinity is threatening to push both to a lower shelf, *Atlantic* and *Harper's* are reappearing from relative obscurity behind the do-it-yourself magazines, and *Playboy* is in short supply?

Or what, more pertinently, is the significance of the sudden and garish prominence of the exposé magazines? Sudden, that is, for the casual browser, who only recently became aware of *Confidential,* which he supposed was a version of the *Police Gazette*. Now there is *Hush-Hush, QT, Top Secret, Whisper, Censor, Uncensored, Anything Goes, Exposed Dynamite* and *Inside Story,* and the whole scandal-mongering family has brashly elbowed the photography magazines into a forlorn huddle behind the *Sporting News*. He notices that fewer people are sneak-reading *Life* and fewer still spinning the mystery rack. Who cares who killed Roger Ackroyd when for the same price you can find out with whom he spent the previous weekend?

Whatever we are to make of this publishing phenomenon, the exposés seem to have earned their newsstand prominence. *Confidential* alone has a circulation of 4,200,000, which is, says publisher Robert Harrison, greater than that of any publication since the Gutenberg Bible. Others of its class are comfortably around the half-million mark. This is a lot of lowdown, even for exposé-hungry Americans. Mr. Harrison feels with some reason that he has hit on a solid thing. He says in an interview in the current *Writer's Year Book*: "The business of being interested in the lowdown whatever the current feeling is, that will continue."

If he means that the exposé as a category of literature is as permanent as lyric poetry or tragedy he is probably right. The exposure of the story behind the story, especially if it is one of defection in high places, has always found and will always find an eager audience. Mr. Harrison might even have pushed his connections back into a respectable if somewhat misanthropic tradition that includes Lucian, Juvenal, Swift, Byron and Twain.

But perhaps he was wisely silent here. These malcontent critics of society differ from the literary private eyes he speaks for, first in that they wrote well, and then that the spectacle of corruption and folly caused them moral indignation. This is not the whole story about their exacerbated response to the disparity between real and ideal, but it is an important part of the story because, as an English critic said of Shakespeare, the artist as artist tends to be the good man in the bad society.

But Mr. Harrison's operating principle (and I take him to speak for the whole exposé world) is that people in high places, especially celebrities, are fair game. These magazines may conduct public-interest crusades against frauds or abuses of one sort or another and sometimes cultivate a moralistic tone, but this is the most palpable window dressing. They obviously pander to a public appetite that may appear quite simple but which is actually a richly complex field of study.

THE EASIEST explanation for the success of the exposé magazines is that the public is generally envious of successful and prominent people. Another man's success only spotlights one's own hopeless mediocrity, especially in America where the fruits of success are so tantalizingly near. The American is not protected from envy by an aristocratic order that makes certain kinds of success unthinkable. With luck he might have been the one sunning himself with the unbelievable blond on the private beach. It is some comfort then (and cause to congratulate himself on his own virtue) to learn that it is the wrong blond and that there will be hell to pay.

Yet the exposé magazines also represent symbolic participation masked as morally indignant discovery, with the exposed one conveniently bearing off the guilt. Exposé magazines are much concerned with the sexual misdemeanors of the famous and well-heeled. A large part of the public can understand this, for in its own fantasies wealth and power seem to find their logical termination in unlimited sex. The rich celebrity in orgy is the perfect actualization of its daydream. Often, indeed, the sin is all that humanizes the celebrity for the non-celebrity: celebrityhood as such is beyond the reach of his imagination.

Perhaps the spotless celebrity baffles more people than he edifies. Perhaps the public is even irritated

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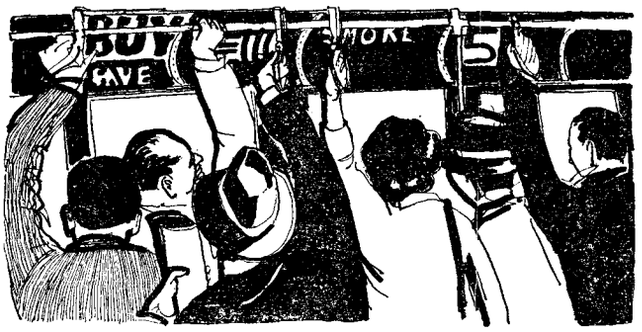
with him for refusing to consume sin conspicuously and glamorously, just as the public is irritated with its rulers when they refuse to ritualize themselves lavishly (even though it may complain bitterly when they do). Besides, for many people there is a dark mystery about evil, as if sin were a heroic tearing aside of a seventh veil to lay bare ultimate truths. No amount of disillusioning experience can break down this naiveté.



As a matter of fact, however, the evil with which the ordinary man invests the rich, the famous and the powerful is based on amazingly little information, no matter how much exposé literature he reads. Yet he finds it easy to believe the most fabulous reports. This suggests that such reports should be understood either as giving hyperbolic shape to his intuition of sheer evil, or as liberating, as if in a work of art, his own potentialities for evil, unrealizable as fact because of the counter forces in himself and the world around him. No man is capable of doing all the evil he can imagine, nor are others capable of the infinitely greater evil he can imagine for them.

But if people in high places are discovered in their sins it is also a great relief. In their proper functions as leaders, admonishers, overseers, inspirers, they put tension in our lives. They force us to be better than it is comfortable to be. Their inspiration, urging and discipline make us battle with our morally and spiritually sluggish selves. Hence there can be a fierce, if only temporary, release from bondage if they topple from their pedestals, or if we can create a situation in which they are toppled. This is what relates the exposé magazine to the medieval fabliau and bestiary, which delighted in displaying the ruling class and the clergy on moral holiday. Besides, our own sins seem almost forgiven in the infinitely greater sins of our betters.

On the other hand the corruption of people in high places is a frightening thing that points to a state of moral and political chaos in which all are lost. Involved in all our other feelings is the expectation that the famous man will be the good man who will force us to be better than we want to be and so keep the evil in us from destroying us. Therefore the revelation of corruption must be controlled lest it scare off or antagonize a good part of its audience. To be a salable commodity there must be some guarantee in it that it is all in fun, that though many have fallen a few remain pure, that the story is given out for its lessoning value, etc. So the reference to an encompassing and protecting moral code is ultimately indispensable if one is to succeed as an exposer. The reference may be hypocritical and cynical, but in making it the exposer is wiser than he knows, and possibly even revealing that he is less a cynic than he thinks.

THE EXPOSÉ also appeals strongly to the inside-dopester who craves "to be on the inside," or at least "to know the inside." This need to know the inside is related to a deep-seated suspicion that behind the ostensibly benevolent facades of human institutions is a sinister cabal, inscrutable and omnipotent, committed to no cause but its own absolute power. Mere mortals catch ambiguous hints of these super beings in myths about Wall Street, international crime syndicates, opulent Jews, Greek shipping magnates, and deadpan millionaires who move political candidates into position like chessmen.

God knows to what extent such Machiavellian subdeities do or ever did exist; but if they did not exist modern man would still have to create them in an effort to give a perverted theological justification to his sense of powerlessness. Indeed, the myth of the sinister cabal may be only the shape the myth of the omniscient and omnipotent expert takes at the moment when we lose faith in it. Perhaps this is why those who believe in the cabal have such mixed feelings for it: fear and hatred coexisting with a last-ditch faith that the cabal will somehow take care of them after all.

People in high places may not be suspected of actually belonging to the cabal; in fact, the cabal can be believed in only in so far as it remains anonymous. But they are closer to it than the rest of us and it is easy to believe that they know its specific shape and share in its dispensations. Therefore they can become its scapegoats. To expose them in their sins is to strike at the dark gods that manipulate us, mock us and torment us. In this manner we feel, perhaps, that we win back a measure of control over our own destinies.

The notion of control returns us to a less mythical aspect of the subject. The public need to learn the ugly truth about celebrities is an index of the extent to which celebrities compel the public. The celebrity as he exists in the mind of the public is in part a creation of the public. The public and the celebrity are locked in an embrace as intimate as that of artist and work of art and exercise an irritating control over each other. The celebrity tries to escape from the embrace in an attempt to be or find his true self, or at least to prove to himself that he really is a celebrity,

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not simply a public fiction. The ritualistic dark glasses of the movie star express very well the celebrity's ambivalent attitude towards this embrace and his ultimate inability (or even desire) to escape from it.

The public's way of attempting to free itself from the embrace is to expose the celebrity as worthless, just as a man hires a private eye to prove that the woman he cannot get out of his mind is two-timing him. The exposé magazine is the private eye promising liberation from an enchantment that is also an enslavement. The reading of the exposé is often, therefore, an attempt to win back control for the self that has dangerously given too much of it away. But it is an over-reaction from an over-reaction, the result of which is an over-valuing-devaluing oscillation. For the public that greedily devours exposé magazines at the same time devours movie magazines (whose own exposés are of an entirely different order), and thus swings like a neurotic lover between a total commitment and a total rejection.

PERHAPS the American's fascination with his world as it appears from a worm's eye view is the other side of what sympathetic observers call his idealism and the unsympathetic call his innocent gullibility. The American is traditionally an over-committed person, the objects of whose enthusiasms blow up in his face. The Empire Builder turns into Robber Baron; the respected financier and pillar of society embezzles millions; a soul-shaking evangelist is found in a love nest; a crusade against demon rum results in terrifying gang rule; a national charity is exposed as a swindle.

To be repeatedly over-sold or duped this way is a painful experience that breeds a desire to be safe from all frauds. Therefore the sterile, rigid position of the cynic is especially attractive. It is apparently a fortress of absolute non-commitment and therefore absolute safety. This is why a racy variation on the everything-is-a-racket theme passes so easily among Americans for the highest wisdom. But there is in cynicism no safety from the agonies of gullibility or unarmored innocence. The cynic is only the innocent in another phase of his gullibility. Now he will believe anything he is told provided it is bad enough; he is as over-committed and as vulnerable to a manipulator as ever.

That is why the worm's eye view in popular exposé literature is so morally and politically demoralizing. It may not in the final analysis expose very much, nor do its victims tend to be really important people. Nevertheless, its tendency is to place the reader in a false dilemma where it seems to him that he must choose between life as a pipedream and life as a racket. Neither alternative promises the enduring act of faith that mature political and moral action requires.

Yet we cannot blame the worm's eye view itself. When used responsibly, and in the awareness of a larger and ultimately more valid point of view, it can have moral and political as well as artistic value. Its abstraction of and concentration on corruption in high places is one way man has of keeping society from rotting from the top down. But exposé literature that irresponsibly combines the worm's eye view with a vulture's instinct for corruption as a commodity strikes at what is best in the American: his idealist's willingness to commit himself to a worthy cause. If the American is to realize his authentic vision he must finally commit himself to the good cause in the full realization that treachery in its usual disguises threatens him on all sides. While learning to see through these disguises he must still be willing to run the risk of being duped, for a naive distrust of all appearances finally proves to be an even more confusing working principle than its opposite.

THE BATHER

His ritual is enormous;
Polyphemous in a mud-pool, bathing,
Crooks his craggy fingers under
A waterspider, carefully writhing

His palm to defend the webless spinner
From the pond's distraction.

"So sweet." The large beginner
At love, whose achievements
Are gross as thunder

Is caught by a gleam
That tickles the man of action
To loutish, contemplative calm:
The hayseed inclined to be tender.

The refinement of touch is new.
Dandling the bug in his palm
He hoists from the water its gem,
Elusive, important, astounding.

"So sweet." The simpleton loves, till the ritual,
Tiring the one-eyed mind, confuses

His love with his wonder. The game's end
Means to be clever and dear, but habitual
Impulse grows on him:

He grunts, and abuses
The creature that walks on the water

With drowning.

LEONARD WOLF.

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THE STAGE

DOWN IN THE VALLEY

WHAT A TANGLE of deadwood has thickly overgrown Mr. Frank Loesser's new musical! One would think professional men of the theater might realize that only on the most serious provocation may an audience be restrained for almost three hours (with a single interval); yet heedless of comfort or sanity or proportion, the architects of "The Most Happy Fella" have made just this relentless demand. Indeed, one of the ironic aspects of the evening at the Imperial is the quiet insolence with which members of the audience register their protest: wandering about the corridors with pastoral ease during the performance; strolling to the rear of the orchestra—and even further, perhaps, who knows, never to return?—for a cigarette or a container of that pastel orange juice, or a box of peppermints, certain that at their return, these indefatigable prophets of good will will still be hurling their high spirits tumultuously across the footlights.

Mr. Loesser, lately of the Ashmolean Museum ("Where's Charley") and the asphalt jungle ("Guys and Dolls"), has here musicked—I can think of no other word—the *vino paisano* rusticities of Mr. Sidney Howard's drama, "They Knew What They Wanted." He has eliminated from that garishly vivid theater piece of the twenties some of its drearier motifs—one no longer need listen to those grinding discussions of the Wobblies, and Mr. Howard's vicious caricature of the local priest, a clerical nightmare, is gone—but in their stead, is Mr. Loesser's quantity of insufferably low comedy really preferable? I doubt it. Essentially, however, the composer has retained the structure of the original work: this is still Mr. Howard's overwrought account of the exuberant Italo-American vintner, his mail-order bride, and their curious, turbulent relationship. Mr. Loesser feels that the play offers itself to operatic manipulation; we shall never know. Myself, I have always thought "They Knew What They Wanted" to enjoy an indefensible esteem: stripped of a certain vulgar superficiality of theatrical effect, it reveals almost no distinction of mind or language or emotion. Mr. Stark Young's telling judgment on another Howard play—"bold without power and humility about the great forces of life . . . advancing with notable facility into regions where only the progressively oblivious could ever be quite at home"—seems to me the last word. Only a large investiture of personal quality—the kind of investiture it was doubtless given originally by Pauline Lord and Richard Bennett—could redeem such a play from its luridly impoverished moral and dramatic sense of life.

Mr. Robert Weede, in the title role of "The Most Happy Fella," gives the occasion just this kind of investiture, vocal and personal, though he must contend with flossy choreography (Oh, they don't wear shoes in the Napa Valley!) and a cast the members of which seem to dispute each with the other in obnoxiousness. Mr. Loesser's avowed intention here is to bridge the chasm between musical comedy and a kind of pseudo-opera, but it is a precarious structure he has built, and one which threatens constantly to plummet into the abyss. The rather tatty recitatives in "The Most Happy Fella," for example, gain nothing by being sung, except a certain grand pretense, and the composer's music of dramatic sentiment, full of bleary unhappiness, winds itself morosely about one or two dim lyrical themes like a spavined horse limping around a hitching post. The ersatz folk-tunes in an Italian vein are more agreeable: here there is a real sensation of spirit, though little of the bite and stain of style. What Mr. Loesser lacks to a notable degree is the dramatic sense: he is not a composer *for the theater* in the way, we might observe, that Kurt Weill was. (And Weill, incidentally, in "Street Scene," did with infinite superiority the kind of thing that Loesser is attempting here.) Mr. Loesser's gifts are all for the jaunty and ironic, for the American smartness and breeze, and these potent abilities are too rarely employed in this grandly ambitious but somehow grotesque and stillborn project. (*At the Imperial.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

SAVE ME THE WALTZ

NO DOUBT Gene Kelly had a brilliant idea when he decided to make an entire film in the dance medium; however, between the idea and the reality, between the conception and the creation, fell several shadows. "Invitation to the Dance," despite its bright moments, is rather disappointing as a whole and lacks the lyrical lift that made Kelly's work in "Singing in the Rain" and "American in Paris" such a joy. Perhaps this new film, which has no spoken dialogue and for which Gene Kelly served as director, choreographer and star, takes itself too seriously. Although Arthur Freed's production in Technicolor is quite handsome throughout, the movie itself settles for old hat rather than invention and spontaneity.

In costumes and sets the most handsome of the three parts of "Invitation" is "Circus," which tells the sad story of a clown (Gene Kelly) who tries too hard to win a ballet girl (Claire Sombert) from her lover,

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a tightrope walker (Igor Youskevitch). Gene is oh-so-Pagliacci in his Harlequin suit as he dances around with the other clowns and in his oversized Pierrot costume as he pines for the girl. Director Kelly uses color beautifully in "Circus," but what impresses most of all is Youskevitch's dancing in his love solo.

The next item, and most derivative of the three, is "Ring Around the Rosy." Its music, composed and conducted by Andre Previn, is a mixture of the nursery song and sophisticated rhythms; and its dancing style is a potpourri of pantomime, ballet and musical comedy. Its story, quite reminiscent of the French movie made from Schnitzler's play, "La Ronde," shows a bracelet going from a husband to a wife to an artist to a model to a stage-door-Johnny to etc., until it finally gets back to the husband who again gives it to the wife. Crowded as it is with characters, "Ring Around the Rosy" doesn't give its starry cast, which includes Kelly and Youskevitch again, Tamara Toumanova, Diana Adams, Tommy Rall and many others, much opportunity to really display their talents. Although most of its tricks have been done before, some of them (the model devouring lunch while dancing, the crooner carrying on before a mike, the yakity-yak at a cocktail party) are still very amusing.

The last item, which uses Rimski-Korsakov themes and gives Carol Haney too little to do in its introduction, is mainly concerned with allowing Gene Kelly as "Sinbad the Sailor" to dance with drawn characters in a long cartoon sequence. While much of this is quite pretty and done with great skill, it is more a feat of technique than dancing artistry. One feels at first he should applaud both Kelly and the clever cartoonists, but the sequence runs too long and ennui succeeds enthusiasm. Gene Kelly deserves credit for attempting an unusual movie like "Invitation to the Dance," but one wishes his film had been more imaginative and daring.

IF ANY movie looked as if Hollywood really were trying to polish off the prize-fight racket, it is "The Harder They Fall." The subject of the crooked promoter and fixed fights has been covered by films before with plenty of gore on ring and camera, but "The Harder They Fall" does everything more so. Producer Philip Yordan (who also wrote the script from Budd Schulberg's novel) and Director Mark Robson pulled no punches and got the realism they strove for. Rod Steiger plays the unscrupulous head of the gambling syndicate, and makes this despicable man convincing by not overplaying the role. Humphrey Bogart has just the right yes-and-no quality as the out-of-work sports columnist who becomes press agent for the seven-foot Argentinian who is to be pushed toward the heavyweight title through a series of fixed fights. Mike Lane is absolutely perfect as the big, muscle-bound boxer who never gets wise to what is being done with him, and is so gentle that he wants to retire after he thinks he is responsible for an opponent's death. Two ex-fighters add to the realism of this good cast: Jersey Joe Walcott as Mike's trainer, and Max Baer as his vicious opponent in the championship bout.

One thing that the makers of this film forget is that the audience has to watch this final fight, in which Baer beats the Argentine fighter into a pulp. The other fights up to this point have been fixed, and, although realistically portrayed, are not too brutal. What cynical Bogart and dishonest Steiger are doing to the simple boy from Argentina is greatly disturbing, but what they allow Baer to do to him in the ring is almost more than one can stand. Because of this, one may well question the picture's effectiveness as entertainment.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"ALGER HISS AT PRINCETON"

Hanover, New Hampshire

TO the Editors: I applaud your editorial on the Alger Hiss controversy at Princeton [Apr. 27] but I disagree with your thinking. I applaud your position because I know that it is the result of a sincere and objective evaluation of a difficult situation, a further evidence of your ability to consider both sides of a question in spite of the fact that your stand will, most assuredly, be unpopular. . . . Unfortunately, in my opinion, The Commonweal, as Chesterton might have put it, seems to be so broadminded about this thing that it could be flatheaded.

In making a number of charming observations about the Hiss affair you never did come to grips with the basic issue: should the properly constituted authorities at the school allow a student organization to make a serious error, under the auspices and acknowledgment of the school, on a matter that goes beyond the vague limits of academic freedom. The question revolves around fundamental concepts of judgment and authority.

It is a privilege and an honor to be invited to address any educational institution in the United States. Such lectures are vital parts of the curriculum. In future years the record of 1956 will recite this lecture as part of what was offered to Princeton students in their pursuit of what the university offered as an education.

I stand strongly with those who say that "free and independent inquiry" are necessary to anyone's definition of education. Protect and cherish, too, the wonderful tradition in American students of taking up the cudgels for the underdog, the persecuted, the down-

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trodden—even when right may be substantially with the insensitive majority. Such endeavors ring with the timbre of courage that hearkens back to 1776 and echoes through the pages of American history.

But let us not lose our sense of values, our perspective in the matter. This freedom to champion unpopular causes is accompanied by a responsibility—to be sure that the cause has some intrinsic merit and that it conforms to some minimal standard of justice. We should not expect college authorities to endorse pranks. For example, the American public could hardly be amused if some fraternity decided to release all the prisoners in a federal penitentiary to broaden their point of view. Such conduct goes too far. And that is where duly constituted authority comes in, to protect academic freedom but also to define the limits within which it can operate.

Alger Hiss is a convicted perjurer. The perjury was committed in relation to a situation threatening the national security of our country. I realize that it is unfashionable to be vehement about that vague problem, but normally it is considered serious. In the face of all the constitutional protections such as due process, which they would have us believe were designed to keep criminals out of jail, Mr. Hiss, oddly enough, was found guilty.

Now if Mr. Hiss had admitted doing wrong, there could conceivably be a case for allowing him to speak under the argument that he had paid the penalty by serving time and that we should not hold the mistakes of the past against a man. But the point is that he has not admitted doing any wrong at all.

We should not, sitting in morbid judgment, look for sackcloth and ashes. But there is a real and subtle danger here. It could be summed up in the words supposedly spoken by a juror rejected for the Hiss trial, who said, "I don't see how he can be guilty, he is a Harvard man." Alger Hiss represents a person who has been legally convicted of not speaking the truth under oath. His opinion on any subject is questionable. He can hardly measure up to the stature of an authority.

There are many suspected criminals who cannot be convicted in a court of law for lack of proof. To them constitutional and academic privileges must be extended—they are innocent before the American public by right. If a man is convicted and is accorded the same treatment, where is the sanction of law? Of what value is a clear record, except to get a job with the FBI?

I submit that the authorities would have been more courageous if they had stood by their own convictions in the matter—which were that he should not speak. As caretakers of the moral and intellectual tone of the school they had a clear and present duty to protect the students from their own irresponsible decision.

The raucous cries of the crude pressure-groups could be suffered easily but could they take the cold and lofty disdain of their "Ivy League Compatriots"?

JOHN MCDERMOTT.

In his letter, Mr. McDermott makes it sound almost as if Alger Hiss had been at Princeton to deliver the Commencement Address. He did not, of course, address the University. In no way was his talk one of those Mr. McDermott calls "vital parts of the curriculum"; he was on campus simply to speak before a student debating society which seems to specialize in inviting controversial figures—though never before with such spectacular results.

Mr. McDermott says the limits of academic freedom are vague. Possibly they are, but they will never be defined other than in specific cases like that of Mr. Hiss' talk. Academic freedom, like freedom of speech, is threatened only in matters involving controversial subjects or persons.

In this instance, the trustees of Princeton did not approve of Mr. Hiss' appearance before the student society. That invitation was issued by a normally autonomous student society; Mr. McDermott thinks the invitation should have been overruled. Under other circumstances, we imagine the University officials might well have been tempted to urge prudence upon the student-officers, precedent or no, if for no other reason than to avoid a spate of publicity. However, veterans' groups, patriotic societies, and individual letter-writers immediately began to bombard the University with demands that the Hiss appearance be canceled. Once the publicity started, to have overruled the students would have looked like abject surrender to outside pressure. Any good university knows such pressure too well to yield to it easily; textbooks in economics are always "too Socialistic" for some; sociology professors always "favor interracial marriage"; the faculty members always have dangerous opinions, in one age "too radical," in another "too conservative"; the students always read "bad books." To yield to outside clamor on internal matters can be fatal to the very idea of a university.

Under these circumstances, Princeton officials may have regretted the Hiss appearance on campus, but they had to make a choice. No one seriously suggests that Mr. Hiss was going to make Communists out of Princeton students during his brief appearance. The danger everyone referred to was that some prestige might come to Mr. Hiss as a result of his appearance —a danger widely exaggerated by press comments on the subject. Against that evil they had to weigh the very real dangers to the University's freedom to act like a university. Seen in this context, their decision not to overrule the invitation makes sense to us.

THE EDITORS.

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Dreiser and His Critics

SEYMOUR KRIM

WHAT SHOULD we do with Theodore Dreiser today—build him a statue, read him, use him as spiritual inspiration? Probably all three if we believe, as I do, that he has enlarged the scope of the American conscience. But there is still a problem. The phenomenon of Dreiser remains almost as puzzling now as when he was alive. He is not specifically relevant today in spite of his great chaotic independence and unremitting dedication to the truth. Yet he looms above, making many of our present writers seem like peevish children and establishing alp-like heights for other novelists to aim at. In this sense he is always relevant even while being, at times, literally impossible to read if one has even a minimum sensitivity to language.

Still another complicating fact in trying to fix Dreiser's position in literature—and he is always breaking through or around what we mean by "art" and even "the novel"—is that it is hard not to become personal about the man since his writing is so self-revelatory. Several articles in the present book* pulse with frustrated love under a crust of fact, and a few others with an equally personal distaste, although this is mainly the reserve of academic critics. Yet even in their articles a bit of fascination with this strange figure peeps through. The simple heroism of Dreiser's helplessness, confusion, ingenuousness and refusal to be side-tracked challenges these writers to hurt him harder than they would another novelist, yet by doing so they acknowledge him.

It is hard to see how they couldn't, in some degree, for our literary history in this century shows that Dreiser was a tremendous pioneer, beginning with the publication of *Sister Carrie* in 1900, a perfect symbolic date. But to return to our first thought—what shall we do with this pioneer now? The biggest obstacle to Dreiser's staying alive is the often hackneyed way in which he expressed himself, and the boredom which he can arouse in even the most sympathetic reader. There was something of the hack-writer about Dreiser, a man who did all kinds of commercial and undistinguished writing to support himself, and who in his young manhood was prey to many conflicting desires which were never resolved; these took him down to the depths as man and writer as well as to heights rarely matched by an American prose writer in this century.

The depths, the gluttony, carelessness, the very literary prostitution and opportunism which soiled his pen and which only the demands of a great soul could transcend even in spasms, are not really considered by many of his good-willed admirers in the present book. These include James T. Farrell, John Chamberlain, Malcolm Cowley, H. L. Mencken and others. In Mencken's case it is understandable that while he was aware of Dreiser's sins he did not talk much about them in print; his hands were full trying to get Dreiser a hearing, a task that is hard for young people fully to appreciate today when every kind of iconoclasm seems to have its place in the modern scene. But perhaps the other critics have more of a responsibility, precisely because of Dreiser's greatness, to look more closely at his wastefulness as a writer and not leave it to unsympathetic writers who wish to see only that. It is this reviewer's personal opinion that unless some of Dreiser's books are sensitively edited—a task that some publisher might consider—they may, in the future, go completely unread.

Such is the fate of much that is remarkable in its own time but that out of simple human inability to cope with all of life must take itself "too" seriously in order to do justice to living experience; if the artist or writer stops to gauge how the standards of the next generation are going to measure his work he may—we have the evidence all around us today—become a critical ruler instead of a genuine creator. Nevertheless, and as some of the writers in this book suggest, the more time departs from Dreiser the more it unmasks the deformed sprawl of his mind and works, as if the curtain had been pulled back from a grounded whale. His books were heroic improvisations, epic in reach and intention, even in a comprehensiveness of the recreation of life which rivals Proust, but undeveloped in form —inert crates of matter, often. Thus one would say that it is unrealistic in spite of the highest respect to persist in praising the dross in even his best books when Dreiser's accomplishment shows itself more objectively in a succession of parts rather than in complete wholes. Even a prehistoric writing animal like

*THE STATURE OF THEODORE DREISER: A Critical Survey of the Man and His Work. Edited by Alfred Kazin and Charles Shapiro. Introduction by Mr. Kazin. Indiana University Press. $5.

Mr. Krim is an anthologist and critic who writes regularly for this and other magazines.

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this genuine hero couldn't successfully bull his way through the invisible laws of proportion that civilization has constructed on the experience of many generations.

DREISER, like many of the most alive Americans, often wrote as if the world began with his birth and might end with his death, and his engorgement made a joke of selectivity and even defied sanity. And yet the peculiar conditions of this country have logically led to the individual's straining the possibilities of reality, and Dreiser was a menacing incarnation of the sophomore-genius type in that sense, which is no more to be sneered at if you are an American than the houses you live in, the music you hear, etc. He is likely "juvenile" in the sense that Henry James said his old countrymen were. But he is also powerful and grave in a way that James never characterized Americans, and that can exalt a reader's mind to spare mountain-peaks of universal truth like the noblest symphonies.

This book makes clear, from anecdote and personal reminiscence, that it was impossible for Dreiser to write without using his actual experience as the ultimate test for the truthfulness of his imagination. Fancy he had, but it was always weighted and even sacrificed by the characteristic experience of the masses of "typical" people of his generation. He identified with these people strongly because all his life he dreamed their dreams and suffered their betrayals, his lower middle-class past being an active part of his mind and his emotions for the course of his entire life.

As John Berryman points out in one of the essays in this book—a refreshingly frank and personal one—what distinguished Dreiser from his contemporaries was "a kind of stupidity, a kind of unself-consciousness" that kept him immune from any kind of fancy superficiality or even improvement of his often dreary (and often moving, when the subject had a dimension that words could not harm) literary style. For all his receptivity and Balzacian association of blazing city lights with fame, fortune and beautiful women, it is never the flash of local color that dazzles Dreiser. Consequently there is less concern over immediate effects—often not enough concern in the sense of shaping a scene to bring out its full significance—and the persistent tread of Dreiser's larger conception soon takes on the solemnity of a religious service, with the reader, in Dreiser's best works, yielding up all minor irritations to the spell of the writer's complete absorption in re-creating life on the page.

THIS PRESENT assessment of Dreiser is welcome in general, interesting, balanced, and missing only some of Burton Rascoe's honest, early criticism to have done its entire duty. It is divided into three main sections: personal reminiscences by such men as Edgar Lee Masters, Ludwig Lewisohn, and Ford Madox Ford; early newspaper and magazine criticism of Dreiser, both pro and con; and finally more extended studies of several of his books by such critics as Malcolm Cowley, James T. Farrell, Alfred Kazin, the late F. O. Matthiessen and others. Almost all of these essays are interesting if you are concerned about Dreiser, including those written out of the "enemy camp," which can be divided into the independents, the neo-humanist group, and Mr. Trilling's "mature liberalism" approach.

This last section includes penetrating critics, such as Thomas K. Whipple, Robert Shafer and Stuart Sherman —unfamiliar names that take one back thirty years when Irving Babbitt and the Humanists were an intellectual force in America and were defending respectable medievalism in modern dress from assaults by Goths like Dreiser. The approach of these critics is sober and high-minded, as befits a group of men oriented to the classics and holding a rigid Christian view of man, but they pelt Dreiser's crudities and "animalization" of human life without honest public recognition of his intention. Ibsen once said: "Zola goes down into the sewer to bathe; I go down to scour it." Never having forgiven Zola, the neo-humanist critics would not admit that Dreiser "went down" with a heavy heart not to exploit but to mother life's victims. In essence their work is ivory-tower criticism, bitter about any change that doesn't embrace their philosophy and turning away from all creative images of the present which exist by their own vitality. Beneath their criticism runs the graver conflict that orthodox Christian critics have had with "naturalism," but it is characteristic of such criticism that it often abandons art completely, as the neo-humanists did, because it is ultimately interested in propagandizing a point of view more than seeing another for what it is.

I find Lionel Trilling's pique with Dreiser's mental slovenliness and general grossness—his "vulgar materialism," in Mr. Trilling's words—also somewhat prissy

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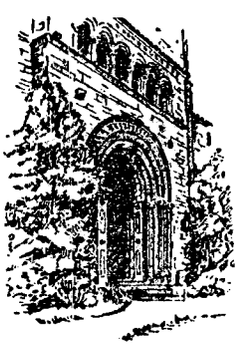

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and unrealistic for all its enlightened air. Mr. Trilling's essential point, made in the course of a long essay on the "easiness" of liberal thinking, is that the liberal critics never dissected Dreiser's vague generalizations about life as they should have, that they sentimentally honored his "honest stupidity" instead of demanding intelligence, clarity and responsibility from him in regard to his ideas. No one wants to quarrel with this as an abstract ideal, but Mr. Trilling, cross-planting T. S. Eliot and the *Nation,* seems to want all the fruits of the spirit hanging from a single tree—that of his own critical taste and cultivation plus the political implications of liberal thought. He wants to reduce Dreiser's philosophizing to its inadequacy as moral precept, and becomes indignant because none of his liberal predecessors have exposed the tatters before.

There is a lack of warmth and charity in this attitude, but apart from that a reluctance on the critic's part to realize that he is privileged to be able to synthesize what is best in several points of view just because there were certain original writers like Dreiser (or Mr. Eliot) who found a commanding vision of truth when Mr. Trilling was a student fighting his way through books. Such truth may need a much more sophisticated or time-dominated revision now, but that would entail a wider respect for the harsher aspects of American life than Mr. Trilling gets into the high brow of his writing. It is all too other-worldly to stick as sharp, permanent criticism of a major writer who certainly deserves acute illumination, but not from the upper stratosphere. Implicit in all the sensible things Mr. Trilling appears to say is the absence of what one must appreciate before one can judge Dreiser, that he is a writer who brought something new into being.

The Eisenhower Crusade and the American Way

AFFAIRS OF STATE: THE EISENHOWER YEARS. By Richard H. Rovere. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. $4.50.

By M. A. FITZSIMONS

THIS BRIGHT and very readable volume is presented as a journal of the Eisenhower years, 1950-1956. The entries in the journal are, for the most part, the author's "Letters from Washington," written for the *New Yorker* and here slightly revised or telescoped. As the running commentary of weekly journalism, the journal is notable for its well-sustained effort to be judicious and for its perceptiveness. The reader will occasionally be annoyed by dated remnants and prophesies no longer of interest. He may wonder why the author did not prepare a fresh and rounded appraisal of the Eisenhower years instead of compiling these lively fugitives from the bound volumes of periodicals. But the wonder, rising out of admiration, supplies its own answer. A new study, comparable in quality to these Letters, would involve a labor of dimensions and endurance transcending the demands of an election year for timeliness.

The journal concludes with "Trial Balances," dated December 1955. By that time the record of the Eisenhower Administration was complete, and in making this judgment the author looks not to the President's heart attack but to the fact that the fourth year of an Administration "is a time not for doing but for backing and filling and talking."

Mr. Rovere's conclusion, as well as his earlier reporting, is in surprising accord with the analysis and conclusions of Samuel Lubell. The battles of Eisenhower Republicans and the Democratic Party are joined under the tattered and ghostly slogans of a vanished era, the New Deal. The historic mission of the Eisenhower Administration is to banish this bellicose heritage. This revolt of the moderates, of course, may end with the discovery of a genuine conservatism. Meanwhile, our political system proffered its ordeal. The Eisenhower Crusaders took Washington—and the Welfare State, a revised but not new edition, clearly became part of the American way, or better and more paradoxically, the *status quo.*

The campaign upheaval reveals the continuity all the more starkly. Mr. Truman received the vice-presidency because he was acceptable to the conservative Democrats as a compromise. Then he became the heir of the New Deal and the occasion for the Eisenhower Crusade. But a major feature in the choice of Mr. Eisenhower was the abandonment of Taft Republicanism. Many of the Taft men, who in the hope of victory turned to Eisenhower, hated the necessity of a choice, which compelled the desertion of a position, a dream and a leader, electorally impossible because of his strong qualities, independent mind and serious defiance of the middle position. Mr. Rovere has a moving account of Mr. Eisenhower's sudden expression of his awareness of the Taft men's feelings in the middle of a speech to Illinois political leaders. Strangely enough, personal defeat coupled with Party victory mellowed Senator Taft, who presented a new appearance in 1953. But "few Americans saw their own image in him, or their father's, or their brother's, and that is probably why he died a Senator."

By contrast, the author stresses the similarities of Dwight Eisenhower and Harry Truman in their family background, training, character and doctrine. "Both have a kind of standard-American personality. Simplicity, frankness, and openness of manner commended each to his own following." Mr. Truman is brisker and more biting. He has read widely in American history, and draws upon its ex-

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perience. Mr. Rovere has more trouble in characterizing President Eisenhower. It is probably significant that he is sometimes driven to the use of negatives in describing the President, for example, his lack of "Truman's sense of the concrete." This lack enables Mr. Eisenhower to use his press conferences for the purest expression of himself as the moderate. The author does not note it, but these rather elementary, vaguely framed expositions of the dilemmas of moderate decision making are only made possible by the President's lack of a sense of the concrete and by his considerable ignorance. At times they seem to be a replaying of a briefing session.

An attempt to extend the similarities to foreign policy is less convincing. The author suggests that the major achievement of Presidents Eisenhower and Truman was in the field of international affairs. Where Mr. Truman organized a concert of powers against the Soviet Union, Mr. Eisenhower preserved one. Unfortunately, by now, it is not in a very good state of preservation. On occasion, as at Geneva, the President has been capable of dramatic initiative. But where Mr. Truman responded vigorously to crisis, Mr. Eisenhower's response has usually been late and little, though reasonably directed. It is true that he has greatly tamed the wilder forms of Republican opposition mentality, the Walter Mittyism of foreign policy. This was a considerable service performed during a long period of quiet word-eating.

The personality sketches are best, such as the quest for the real Dulles, or the strongly unloving account of Richard Nixon, the ranking politician "in an administration headed by a soldier and staffed by merchants." My favorite is "I've Got a Paper Here," based on an interview with a relaxed Senator McCarthy in May, 1949. It captures the essence of the Senator's method; the presentation of serious charges bolstered by documents that prove very little. This travesty of argument and scholarship is crowned by cross references in the form of sinister suggestions designed to produce bewildered conviction.

Victims of Modern Bedlam

THE DISPOSSESSED. By Geoffrey Wagner. Devin-Adair. $3.50.

By DACHINE RAINER

MR. WAGNER'S story, serviced as it is by several *diabolae ex machina,* and rather too facilely written, counts for little; his point of view is everything. I must make two confessions: one, that I have no patience with propaganda writing, and that as poor art I find it invariably vitiates the cause it seeks to serve, and two, that the special pleading that inspires *The Dispossessed* has my undiluted sympathy. Like Mr. Wagner, I believe that the attitude towards and treatment of people who have been imprisoned in mental institutions, for whatever cause—ranging from the apparently permanently deranged to those who in an extreme situation have had a temporary breakdown—is usually so absurd, cruel, meaningless, unnecessary, that, despite the smooth scientific allusions to progress, therapy, cure, it is exceedingly difficult not to view these scattered cities of helpless victims—the vast population of the dispossessed—as Bedlam in Modern Dress.

Mr. Wagner's story, complexly and artificially plotted, depicts the misadventures of a young English army captain who has suffered concussion during a bombing in War II and recovers consciousness only to find himself locked up in an army lunatic asylum from which he is unable to extricate himself for three years. Finally freed—and the reader is convinced of the hero's sanity all during the period of his monstrous "cure," but is not similarly convinced of the sanity of either doctors or attendants—his problems on the outside are monumental.

Mr. Wagner's characters, in spite of their polemical roles, are extremely well realized, sometimes gruesomely convincing in their grim comedy of dialogue and situation.

On the outside, his wife has been faithful, waiting, it seems to me, rather apathetically, and doing nothing to help or speed up the process of his rehabilitation. This book presents, incidentally, a damagingly accurate picture of the unwitting complaisance of the victim's family with the atrocity of his fate. There is too frequently an eagerness for the family to comply—in relief, resignation, ignorance—with the authoritative approach and apparent knowledgeability that this branch of the medical profession adopts.

Although the hero's wife presents no immediate problem, he, with a tag of "constitutional inferiority," finds his search for a job disheartening. When, because of his skill as a chemist, the hero is finally hired with his former high status in the industry, it is only to be used, first, as an agent in a ruthless competition against his former firm, and second, as a scapegoat in an accident that ensues. Washed up in England, he and his wife, who is American, come here, where things simmer down for awhile, only, inevitably, to flare up again. This time he can't cope with the cumulative effects of his problems, and is driven to suicide.

The final incident, which I won't go into here, taxes my credulity somewhat, and I must conclude, that for the purposes of special pleading, Mr. Wagner stacks his incidents rather gratuitously. Moreover, the charge of negativism is bound to be levelled against him: you can point out what's wrong, all right, but what are you going to do about it?

Although one is inclined to forget it, this is not a tract, but the story of the destruction of a man, a man of considerable talent, by the twin agencies of mental therapy and a repressive social order. The author has learned much from Wyndham Lewis about the destruction of a character in a work of fiction. I think specifically of Lewis' masterpiece *Self-Condemned.*

I do not know if Mr. Wagner in titling his novel had James' story "The Turn of the Screw" in mind: "and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped"—another story of an individual, a child, overcome by the

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"real" world. Certainly the increasing numbers of the dispossessed make one aware of the poignancy and degree of the breakdown of the family. The child, the old and the mentally disturbed are shuttled off, in their helpless state, frequently with heartbreaking but futile protest, to the appropriate institution; and the mentally ill are dispossessed with the greatest dispatch of all.

A True Humorist

COMFORT ME WITH APPLES. By Peter De Vries. Little, Brown. $3.50.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

ONE REVIEW of this very funny story has managed to make serious references to Ivy Compton-Burnett, Sinclair Lewis, and Marcel Proust. Another mentions Dylan Thomas and Kingsley Amis. Reading Mr. De Vries' newest novel, I could imagine an intellectual parlor game, perhaps called Parallels, based on the De Vries *oeuvre*. One point apiece for being reminded of Randall Jarrell's inverted wisecracks (De Vries: "Another of those headaches that fought aspirin four ways"); of John O'Hara's mispronouncing characters ("You're such a shiny example"); of Robert Benchley's deadpan analyses (macaroni described as "an off-white matter made of dried toothpaste, eraser crumbs and old regrets"); of Mary McCarthy's cliché-snares ("Next to him, grasping him firmly by the arm in the established tradition, was the rather sheepish 'officer whose brilliant sleuthing cracked the case' "). And so on — Max Schulman, James Thurber, J. D. Salinger. . . .

But there is a De Vries cachet, signifying him to be a genuine original and saving him from the accusation of copying. A great many of his lines are *primarily* funny, not incidentally so; the laugh counts more than the subject. It is true that in his complicated explorations Mr. De Vries tempts the reader to take him seriously as a commentator on the American cultural scene. He is at his best in describing cultural pretensions while/or making fun of cultural realities. The title of his first book, a collection of sketches, was *No, But I Saw the Movie,* which indicated the modern American's attempt to show that he does keep up with culture—more or less. Many of the De Vries characters like to fancy themselves as witty, Wilde-like *boulevardiers* who speak in sage paradoxes, using "one" for the subject of their sentences. Others, too dull to have any such pretensions, make remarks that unwittingly evaluate certain oddnesses of our speech and values: "It seems funny around here without him cracking his jokes" and " 'We're morally bankrupt.' . . . 'We're a damn sight worse than that. We're bankrupt.' " But Mr. De Vries is first a humorist. In most cases he seems to have thought of the gag first, the context afterward; and in most cases he overtly or implicitly admits this. It gives him both his special value and his limitation. It makes him seem most at home in the vignette, and something of a wandering tourist in a novel. It makes possible some of his best moments, for he is a lover of puns and other forms of wordplay that owe much of their outrageous effect to the discrepant and elaborate structures they rest on. For example, in this story two of the characters obviously visit Tanglewood precisely in order to give the narrator a chance to mention "the Brahms bursting in air."

The De Vries technique requires careful balance when it is applied to the novel, where characters and situations created for humorous possibilities have to be kept going through extended and sometimes serious activities, where they have to become something like real people. It would be unfair to say that Mr. De Vries loses his sense of bal-

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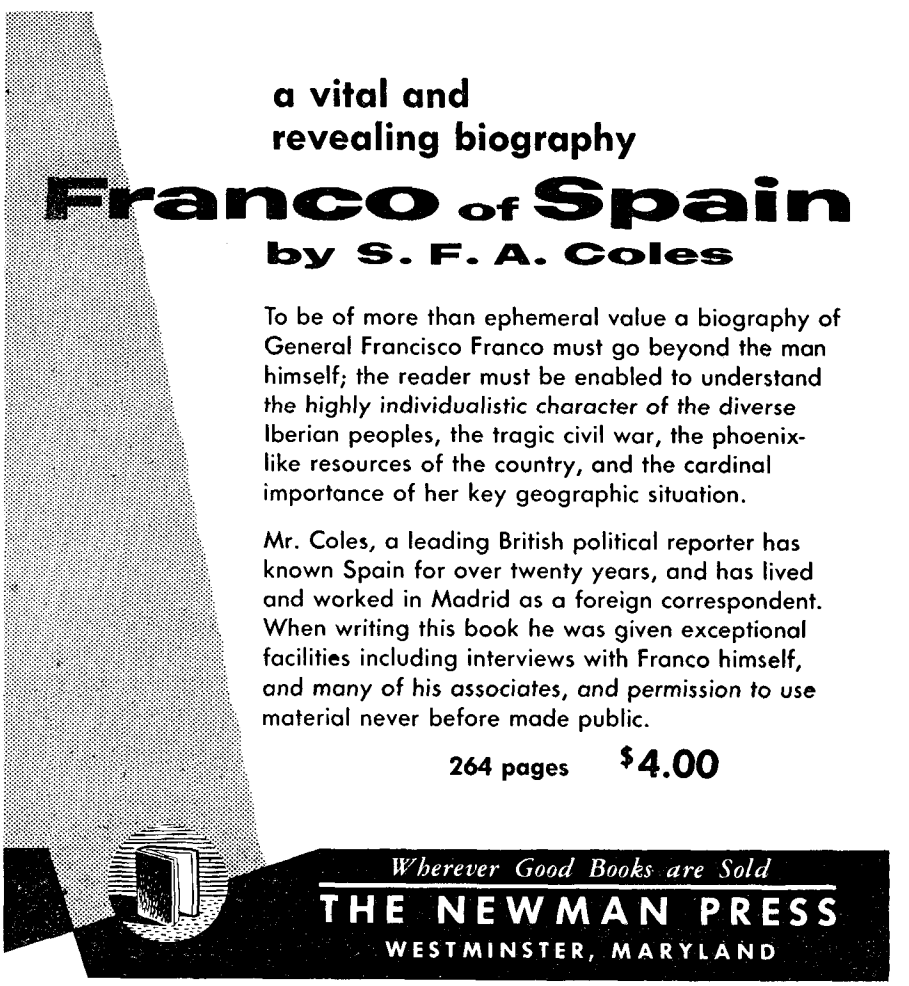

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—Abbé Dimnet, The Commonweal, February 17, 1926

Of all Western nations, the French Republic seems to be the one that the average American finds most hard to understand. In politics he is bewildered by swift changes of government that leave Frenchmen unconcerned and the life of their nation undisturbed . . . And questions come to his mind: what is wrong with them? Why can't they learn to run their country like a good business? . . . It is hardly possible for one who has not been reared in it to acquire the feel of the peculiar mixture of classicism and revolutionary dreams that has formed the modern French mind. The vitality of a people is marked by the way it weathers the crises of its history. . . In a world where power-politics prevails, where monolithic blocs are favored, where the distinction between the aim and the means tends to vanish, the example of the French is a reminder that politics is neither a mathematical game nor a business gamble, but an art where the human element should dominate.

—Fr. George H. Tavard, The Commonweal, February 3, 1956

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ance, but in this novel, as in his previous one, *The Tunnel of Love*, he cannot conceal the fact that he must sometimes work hard to keep it. The De Vries technique, however, when properly applied, is most satisfyingly successful. The jokes—there are many of them—are almost always worth the trouble; a wide-ranging, happy, and cultured mind makes its presence felt; and no bones are broken.

The Perfect Life

RICHARD RAYNAL, SOLITARY. By Robert Hugh Benson. With an introduction by Evelyn Waugh. Illustrated by Valenti Angelo. Regnery. $3.50.

By ELIZABETH BARTELME

THE EARLY twentieth-century vogue for the work of Robert Hugh Benson, done to death by the onset of the naturalistic novel, shows indications of reviving. Although Benson's historical romances and novels of contemporary life have for many years been disregarded by the serious reader, his natural talent as a storyteller is indisputable and worthy of more attention than it receives.

Recognizing this, the "Thomas More Books to Live" series has added *Richard Raynal, Solitary* to its list of resurrected classics, and brought back into print one of Hugh Benson's most crystalline tales. This artfully contrived story is fashioned like a perfectly wrought masterpiece of the goldsmith to gleam against the less dazzling fabric of the body of his work. Unlike his more straightforward novels, *Richard Raynal* is an allegory of the perfect life, romantically conceived.

Choosing an elaborate device to work out his theme, the author explains in a preface that while in Rome he has "discovered" a manuscript, "translated" it, and from it has deciphered the following story. Master Richard Raynal is a hermit who lives in a green wood, in harmony with the Universe and in communion with God. His life is all that he would desire until it is

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interrupted by a divine command to carry a message to King Henry VI. Leaving his hut, his bees and all the beauty that surrounds and satisfies him, he sets off, unaware of the nature of his message, but confident of enlightenment. An encounter with an anchorite provides him with knowledge of his mission —and of his fate as well. He reaches the king, and warns him that he must prepare to suffer the passion of Christ. At this, Master Richard's trials begin. Suspect by all in the king's retinue, he is assaulted physically and mentally until he is wounded as Christ was wounded and has suffered as Christ suffered. At last, having convinced the king and the court of the truth of his message, and having enacted in his own person the future sufferings the king must undergo, he dies in Henry's bed.

The strange brief tale is told with an artistry and attention to detail that imbues it with a strong pictorial quality. Evelyn Waugh, in his preface to this edition, calls it "a piece of ecclesiastical decorative art, comparable to a tapestry by Burne-Jones or a painting by Holman Hunt." He has caught exactly, in this comment, the Pre-Raphaelite influence apparent in *Richard Raynal*. Benson, like many of his contemporaries, seems to have been affected by the fashionably uncritical view of medievalism, finding in it a vision and an ideal lacking to a more practical age. It accounts for much of the charm of the story, but it is also responsible for its static element.

But in spite of the studied effect of this "tapestry," Benson shows himself a wit as well as a romantic. His preposterous, tongue-in-cheek footnotes, by which he comments on, rebukes and corrects both the narrator and the scribe, are punctuation marks of delightful foolery. And the didacticism that occasionally interrupts the flow of many of Hugh Benson's novels does not mar *Richard Raynal*.

In tossing bouquets at this beautiful period piece, one ought to be aimed at the general design and illustration of the book. Valenti Angelo has captured the medieval spirit effectively and it is pleasant to feel that the book that Robert Hugh Benson regarded as his favorite will reach a new audience in such a handsome package.

REVIEWERS

M. A. Fitzsimons is the editor of the *Review of Politics*.

Dachine Rainer, a frequent reviewer, has recently been published by Ballantine Books in *Four Short Novels*.

Edwin Kennebeck is a regular reviewer for The Commonweal.

Elizabeth Bartelme is on the staff of a New York publishing house.

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